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CLIQUE

THE sentiment so tersely expressed by the miner in Leech's inimitable sketch, suggesting to his companion to 'eave 'arf a brick' at a passing stranger, has found, in a modified form, an echo, at some period or another, in every human heart. The spirit of clique, of clannishness, or whatever name it may bear, is one which is common to humanity at large, a relic, probably, of the state of aggressive self-defence which formed the existence of our primitive ancestors. As introduced into every-day English, the word clique is essentially modern; but it represents an institution the age of which it would be impossible to determine. Did it not sound perhaps somewhat irreverent, it might be suggested that in the pre-Adamite era the fate of the fallen angels, so dramatically related by Milton, could be traced to the spirit of clique, one which would seem to be inherent in all living nature. Sir John Lubbock, in his interesting series of studies on the Intelligence of Ants, has shown us that the same feeling actuates insect life; the members of one anthill, even when separated by a year's absence, being, we are assured, promptly recognised, or assisted in trouble, by their comrades, where an outsider or a stranger would be mercilessly and instantly despatched. It is this same feeling which in savage life explains the animosity of tribe against tribe, reflected to our own day in the familiar *vendetta* of Corsica, or the blood-feuds which the criminal records of the United States show to exist in the New World in that vague and extensive land of opportunities known as 'Out West.'

From the altitude of civilised existence, we are apt to stigmatise all such human failings as 'savagery,' forgetful that in our midst the same spirit survives, if scarcely with the same homicidal ferocity, at least with much the same intensity of feeling. We pride ourselves that the

contrast which marks our modern notion of civilisation and the social life of our more primitive ancestors, is the gradual disappearance and abolition of the tribal distinctions which in savage life are enforced with such stringency; we are seemingly unconscious that the spirit which on a large scale arms nation against nation, and in a less degree splits society up into a number of conflicting 'sets,' is a survival of a past when a general state of defensive preparation against outside attack constituted the normal condition of humanity, and each little clique of individuals thrown together by natural circumstances held it as a mutually accepted understanding to protect its members against interference from without. *Esprit de corps* is another of the euphemisms with which we designate the spirit of clannishness; allied to which is the even more subtle but none the less equally well-marked spirit that keeps up the rigid distinctions of caste not only in the East but among ourselves. Without that spirit, humanity in the past would never, probably, have survived; and even now, without its aid, the wheels of modern existence would scarcely work smoothly.

Of late, there has been quite a stir in the English world of letters on the subject of what has been termed literary 'Log-rolling,' an American variation—taken from the lingo of the emigrant pioneers—of our own less refined principle of, 'You scratch my back, I scratch yours,' a process which solely owes its origin to the spirit of clique; and the institution, called into question, has been ably defended by more than one brilliant writer. In literature, more especially in literary criticism, it would seem particularly difficult to avoid such influences, in spite of the apparently thick veil of anonymity which covers authorship in our country. In the ranks of the profession itself, the secrecy kept so profoundly from the world at large, does not exist, and Jones knows perfectly well that he can look

to Smith for a kind word when the occasion arises—a reciprocal arrangement which works equally for all the members of the particular clique to which they severally belong. In the arts, the principle is the same, whether an Exhibition is to be criticised or a play advertised.

It is urged by some that this friendly form of mutual admiration, which it seems impossible to avoid, possesses its advantages. What the exact morality of the arrangement may be, it is perhaps a little difficult to say. It cannot be denied that with its influence the truth is not always dragged from its modest hiding-place. It is impossible for members of one and the same set—mutually jealous, and aware of each other's deficiencies as they may be—men who have dined and wine together, to criticise each other as they might otherwise do, if not so deeply indebted to, rather, perhaps, so completely dependent on, each other.

As originally organised, clubs of course owed their existence to the spirit of clique. Men of one 'set' would gather together at some special place of entertainment, and only after due initiation would admit 'outsiders.' This was the simple custom of the past, of which many historical instances are familiar, possessing their existing parallels nowadays, though it is to be regretted that to a great extent we have broken in on the good old traditions. It is characteristic of modern existence that too many of our clubs are now each the centre of a numerous series of small coteries, the members of which are as distinct as mutual absence of sympathy can succeed in rendering a number of fellow-mortals who are only united by the selfish advantages they owe to a common annual subscription.

As for the dividing lines which separate society so sharply into its cliques innumerable, what need is there to do more than refer to so familiar an expression of the social sectarianism from the effects of which every one must have suffered at some time or other of his existence? In no direction is it possible to escape from the influence of clique. Every profession will be found to be divided into its various 'sets,' all completely divided. If, in the great cities, something of the influence of a daily existence in which so many incidents are common to all sections of society, tends to a slight extent to lessen the rigid exclusiveness of clique laws, those who live in the country, perhaps even more those who live in country towns, know how severely social distinctions are enforced, and at the same time how solid are the advantages accruing from the superior clannishness on which this spirit is based. Few things are more constantly the source of regret among certain members of the community than what are called the levelling tendencies of the age. Such pessimists may, however, gather comfort from the fact, that destructive as may be many of the effects of modern progress, the spirit of clique is too inherently rooted in human nature to be easily swept away by any political convulsions. That spirit is dependent on a natural craving for the moral and material support derived from association with fellow-mortals.

The feeling which dictates this sense of dependence possesses its excellent as well as its easily detected evil qualities. A state of social Ishmaelism would be indeed intolerable.

RICHARD CABLE,

THE LIGHTSHIPMAN.

CHAPTER XXXV.—'MAGPIE' BEER.

WHEN the rector appeared at the *Magpie*, Mrs Cable was pleased to see his genial face, but uncertain how her son would take his visit. She had no doubt that the message of which he spoke was one that would irritate him. In all probability, Josephine asked his pardon; but he was in no humour to grant it. Bessie Cable had ceased to speak to him about his wife. Any allusion to her, however slight, roused his anger; and the only way in which she could keep him quiet was to talk of future plans, or of what the children were doing—how they picked mushrooms on the downs and blackberries in the hedges.

She put her finger to her lips when the rector blurted out his purpose in coming, and beckoned to him to come in with her to the parlour. Then, when he had complied, she asked him to be seated, and standing herself respectfully, told him, with a distressed face and with the tears trembling in her eyes, how matters stood.

The rector listened to her, interrupting every now and then, because he could not keep his tongue quiet; and when she had done, he began to talk. He told her that her whole past history was known to him; and that in his opinion the time had arrived when Richard must be told who was his father, and what the wrong was that had been done to his mother. 'Leave it to me,' said Mr Sellwood; 'I will tell Richard; but when I stamp on the floor thrice, you must come up; I shall want you.'

'Please, sir, say as little to him as you can about his wife. It has become a craze with him that she is the occasion of every misfortune and trouble that has come upon him. He is an altered man—altered for the worse. I scarce know my gentle, loving Dick any more. I do even believe he has left off saying his prayers.'

'Let me alone,' said Mr Sellwood. 'I have mixed with all kinds of men and seen all sorts of humours, and I will deal with him discreetly. —Now, I will go up, or he will be suspecting that you have been priming me.'

'Will you take anything, sir, after your long journey? Shall I order you—some beer?'

'Beer!' exclaimed Mr Sellwood. 'On no account.' He dashed up the stairs. '*Magpie* beer—and in a week be lowered to teetotalise the county!'

'How are you?' exclaimed the rector, bursting into the room occupied by Richard. The stairs were very steep, almost like a ladder. He had gone up them fast, and precipitated himself against the frail door, that flew open before his weight. He came in like a blast of healthy cool wind that drives fogs and miasma away. His hearty red face, his cheery spirits, his crisp manner, had a momentarily salubrious effect on the sick man, whose brain was clouded with the

fever-fogs that rose from his festering heart. He put out his hand, and the rector shook it.

The rector was one of those men who carry with them wherever they go a sense of substantiality. Men in an uncertain position, pecuniary or social, have ever a crack in them. They cannot help it—it is inevitable. But the rector was a gentleman by birth, a man of private means, an incumbent in an established church, of hereditary orthodoxy, who no more changed his opinions than he changed his banker; who no more dreamed of insecurity in his position than he dreamed of giving up the *Guardian* or of going through a course of Zola. A man with an uncertain position is a man with a very thin skin, and he is always supposing that he is being tickled, or pinched, or impinged upon by those about him, wilfully, and he resents these touches as personal affronts. But a man who has been a gentleman since he fed out of a silver spoon as a baby, and who has never overdrawn his account at the bank; who, like certain Alpine plants, knows perfectly his own level, and that he will get frozen if he creeps above it, or stifled if he descends beneath it, is confident, thick-skinned, never imagines and resents a slight. He pities the unfortunates who do not appreciate his worth, and would help them freely out of his purse, however grossly they might have insulted him, should they need assistance. Such a man is a rhinoceros as to hide; not arrows or spears, only conical rifle bullets, pierce his skin. But the triple-hided rhinoceros is the gentleman incumbent in an established church, who knows that his tithes must be paid, and that nothing short of a revolutionary explosion can shake the establishment. Such a man imposes by his presence, by his confidence in himself; and when the rector burst into Richard's room, Richard, who was disposed to be angry at having been pursued from the east to the west by one of Hanford, was unable to look surly and turn his face to the wall and keep his hand in bed.

'Parson-Sellwood,' said Richard Cable, 'I won't say that I'm not glad to see you; but if you come with a message to me, I must ask you not to deliver it. I can have no more communication with one who has hurt me past the power of forgiveness. I don't want ever to hear her name again. I wish I may never see her face. I curse the day that we met. She came to me in storm, and I put out my arms and took her into my vessel. And in return, she has pursued me till she has thrown me and my little ones out of our house, our home, cast us up, shipwrecked waifs, on a strange shore, and me flung out with an injury that will never be got over. That she has hurt my body, matters little—I could have forgiven that; but she has crushed and crippled also my child. Little Bessie and I are both wrecks; my home is wrecked, my happiness is wrecked, my faith is wrecked—and she has done it, she alone!' He turned his head away.

'Cable, my good fellow,' said the rector, taking a chair and seating himself in it a little way from the bed, where he could watch Richard, 'the message I bring you must be told.'

'I will not hear it.'

'The person who gave it me urged it on me before we parted.'

'Take it back to her unuttered. I throw it in her face.'

'I beg your pardon. The person is not a she.'

'What!—the message is not from my—from her?'

Mr Sellwood evaded a direct answer. 'As I came along on the coach, I had a most earnest message imparted to me to convey to you.'

'She has come! She is here! She is below!' almost screamed Cable. 'Let her not come near me, or touch one of my children!'

'The coachman was very particular that I should remember to advise you on no account to touch the *Magpie* beer. It is made with Epsom salts.'

Richard turned his head sharply round and stared at the rector.

Mr Sellwood maintained a face of the utmost gravity. 'Poor fellow!' he continued. 'It has disagreed with him; and having a warm heart, he pities you, and repeatedly sent this message to you by me—Don't drink any *Magpie* beer.'

Richard drew a long breath. 'This was all, was it?'

'The *Magpie* beer,' proceeded the rector, throwing one leg over the other and folding his hands and twirling his thumbs, 'is reported to be lowering; and my good friend the coachman believed that no one but a coastguardman could drink it long without becoming a teetotaler.'

Richard still stared at his visitor.

'The *Magpie* beer,' said the imperturbable rector, 'is held to be the real cause why Jacob Corye cannot fatten his young stock. Has he said anything to you about his calves and bullocks that he raises?'

'And rears,' interjected Richard, and sank flat on the bed. 'Too much. In mercy—I have had enough of that. I did not expect this from you, sir. My head turns. I pray you, none of this seesaw about raising and rearing and fattening.'

'You wish me to change the topic?'

'By all means, sir, or I shall go mad. That Jacob Corye comes in here with his pipe and his jug of beer.'

'Never touch it,' interrupted the rector.

'And talks of naught else but the raising and rearing and the fattening of young stock, till, in spite of my thigh, I think I must jump out of bed and run away.'

'Is it a fact that he feeds his young stock on beer?'

'I don't believe a word of it, sir.'

'Or that there is Epsom salts in his beer?'

'I've not tried it; I can't say.'

'When I heard of the properties of that beer—I was so troubled in mind at the danger you ran, that I came at once to see, to bring you the message and warn you of your danger.'

Richard raised himself in the bed slightly. 'Sir,' he said, 'I do not understand. You did not come all the way from Hanford to caution me against the *Magpie* beer—did you?'

'No. I cannot say that. The coachman spoke to me about it; but—as you ask *what* the real motive of my journey was, I do not object to tell you.'

Then Richard became agitated. 'I heard you speak down-stairs. You have a message to me from—from her. I will not receive it.'

'You need not,' answered the rector with placidity. 'But it does my heart good to hear you have not touched the *Magpie* beer. I have come here to talk to you about your father.'

'My father!' Again Richard stared at his visitor.

'You ran away from Hanford in such a hurry,' continued the rector, 'that those who desired to communicate with you after your father's death'—

'My father is dead!'

'And were at liberty to do so,' proceeded Mr Sellwood, 'had not the opportunity. I may tell you candidly that I have only recently learned the circumstances of your parentage—only since your abrupt departure. In the matter of his estate, which you may justly claim'—

'He was rich!—left money!' gasped Richard.

'Excuse me, Cable, but you are rather given to interrupt. When you turn a tap, a stream flows out; but if you put your finger in the way, an even flow is diverted into sprits and splashes. If you will allow me to tell the story in my own quiet way, without breaks, it will be more consequent, and easier for me to tell and you to follow.' Then he stamped thrice on the floor; and immediately Mrs Cable came up. 'I desire you to be present,' said Mr Sellwood, 'whilst I tell Richard your story, and concerning his own father, that you may confirm me when I am right and correct me when wrong.'

Richard looked uneasily at his mother. 'I do not wish to hear the story,' he said bluntly.

The rector understood him, and looking him steadily in the eye, said: 'It is a story which, though it tells of wrong done to your mother, tells of nothing but what makes for her honour. —She is a woman'—he rose and bowed to Bessie—'I could almost envy you to be able to call her your mother—a woman I always respected, one whom now I revere.' Then he sat down again.

Cable was touched, softened; he put out his hand to his mother and clasped hers. Their eyes met. The little cloud of doubt which had always hung on his mind was gone. His mother was irreproachable. He had felt it must be so, and yet he was not sure. Then he turned to the rector and said: 'Thank you, sir—thank you for that.'

'Now, Cable, you must listen to me patiently and without interruption—I hate interruptions—whilst I tell you the entire truth.'

Then he told Richard what he knew. It was the merest outline of a life-story, which Bessie could have filled in with a thousand particulars, but which were now unnecessary. Mr Sellwood told the story with delicacy, avoiding the slightest reproach on the memory of the dead man, casting the blame on his relations, perhaps exaggerating the pressure that was brought upon him to induce him to consent to the annulling of the marriage.

As Richard listened, his eyes were fixed on his mother, and his thought throughout was, what she had endured, and with what silent dignity she had borne her wrong.

'And now, Cable,' continued the rector—'now I come to speak about Josephine.'

Instantly, at the sound of her name the man's

face altered. He let go his mother's hand, and gathered up the sheet about his ears and shouted: 'I will not hear about her; I will receive no message from her. I would to God I could forget her!'

'Do not act like a child, Cable,' remonstrated Mr Sellwood. 'I must speak'—

'But I will not listen,' retorted the maimed man.

The rector looked at Bessie, and she at him. What was to be done?

Just then, up the stair came the host with a jug of beer in his hand. 'Well, I never!' exclaimed Jacob Corye. 'A parson in the *Magpie*! This is the first time this has happened. Well, sure, this is an honour; and sir—if I may make so bold—you'll drink the *Magpie* beer, and no better was ever brewed, to the good-luck of the house; and to the mending of the cap'n, you shall drink a second, and no charge for either.'

'My good friend'—protested the rector, backing.

'Nay; I'll take no refusal,' insisted Jacob. 'My beer is famous, and you shan't have to pay for it. First time a parson has come over my drexil [threshold] and stood between my derns [jams]. Drink, sir!—Nay, parson! Drain it to the bottom, to the good-luck o' the *Magpie*; and I'll fill it again to the mending of the cap'n's thigh. Now, sir!—Nay, drink away, to the last drop; there's more coming.—Now, sir, what do you say to *Magpie* beer?'

CHAPTER XXXVI.—YET.

Mr Sellwood walked back to his inn, carrying within him two jugs of *Magpie* beer, and the equally salt and sour conviction that he had failed with Richard. He had not been able to convey to him Josephine's message; he had not been able to tell him of her resolution to make over Gotham's property to him. He was in that touchy and obstinate state of mind that he refused to allow the smallest reference to his wife.

How the characteristics of the mother came out in the son under similar provocation! As, under the influence of pleasure or pain, of strong passion, of death-faint, likenesses never before noted appear on a face, so is it with mental and spiritual characteristics. Long years may pass without any resemblances having been traced, and then, all at once, the son, under exciting conditions or numbing sorrow, reproduces the modes of thought, follows the lines of his parents' conduct in similar situations. Bessie Cable had been silent for many years, burying her grievance in her heart, brooding over it, showing it to none; and now, her son, staggering under a blow, fell into the same course, and doggedly refused to allow her who had struck him to be mentioned in his presence.

The rector was a sanguine man. He buoyed himself in the confidence that everything would come right in the end; but he was forced to admit to himself that this end was a long way off in the case of Cable and Josephine. Those qualities in the man which had made him estimable before—his steadiness of purpose, his reserve, his self-respect, his patience in the midst of difficulties—combined now to impede a recon-

ciliation. He had taken his resolution, and would adhere to it with iron tenacity. He would confide his wrongs to no one; take counsel from no one, be swayed by no one. His galled dignity would harden into stubborn pride; his patience would make him endure every extremity without a murmur, rather than yield. Mr Sellwood saw that the task he had set before himself, and which had presented itself to him at first as easy, was one beyond his powers of performing. He went in a meditative mood to the telegraph office, and sent a communication to his wife at Hanford concerning those who had been lost in the wreck; but he sent none to Josephine. He did not know how to couch his message in a few words. He walked home to the inn and called for a drop of brandy, to correct the evil influences of the *Maggie* beer, and looked about for writing materials. He would send Josephine a letter. He speedily disposed of the brandy; but the letter was not so easily managed. What was he to say? That the Cables were safe, but that Richard had injured his thigh; that they had lost everything except a small sum of money that Richard had carried on his person, and which, therefore, had not fallen into the hands of the salvors. He might write this, but it would have the effect of bringing the impetuous Josephine there; he was sure of that; and the result would be to aggravate the estrangement. He had his pen in his mouth, biting the end of the quill and ripping the feathers off it with his teeth, with a puzzled and distressed look on his honest face, when the waiter opened the door and said that Mrs Cable wished to speak with him.

'Show her in,' said the rector, drawing a sigh of relief. Perhaps she could help him out of his difficulty: anyhow, her interview with him would delay the execution of his embarrassing task.

'Sit down, Mrs Cable—sit down. Just wired to Mrs Sellwood about the poor fellows. She will go round and see their families and break the news to them. She is a wonderful woman—wonderful in these painful cases—has such tact; I do not know what I should do without her.—Sit down; do.—I've—apologetically—been taking just a drop, only a drop of brandy, neat; did not feel quite myself within.—Had a good deal to upset me of late.' He pointed with the end of his pen at the little bottle and glass. A long curl of ripped feather hung from the quill. He had pulled it off with his teeth, in his perplexity, as if the solution to his difficulty was to be found under the outer cortical, as a woodpecker seeks its food under bark and moss on tree-boughs.

'I have been writing—that is, I have begun a letter. No. Upon my word, I have only begun to think about beginning one, and have got no further into it than "My dear Josephine." If it were a sermon, I should have got on famously by this time; but—I am pulled up at the very outstart. I can't get on.—I hope you have brought me something satisfactory, which I can say.'

Mrs Cable's handsome face was troubled. 'I suppose, sir, I did wrong harbouring my resentment against Gabriel for so many, many years; and now the chastisement has come on me.

Richard said that as he had maimed little Bessie, she had maimed him, and that this is a law. As I was unforgiving, so now is my son unforgiving. I was hardened for more years than I like to say, and I doubt if he will yield sooner. I am a woman, with a woman's weakness; and he a man, with a man's strength.'

'But then,' resumed the rector, 'it makes all the difference that your resentment was against a man, and his is against a weak girl.'

Bessie shook her head. 'Gabriel, heaven knows, was weak enough.'

'He never sought to make amends to you. Josephine is full of self-reproach, and is thoroughly in earnest in her desire for reconciliation.'

'It cannot be,' said Mrs Cable, after a moment's consideration. 'If he forgave her to-day, they would be apart again to-morrow. They have nothing in common; with the best wishes to be happy together, they could not unite. There's a way of the weft and a way of the woof in everything—in human natures, as in brown holland or silk velvet. If you join two pieces of the same material with the weft of one across the woof of the other, there'll be puckers for ever. You may wash and pull and iron to get them smooth; but you wash into fresh puckers, and you pull apart and iron into creases. I leave you to judge how it must be when you stitch together sailcloth and satin across each other's grain.'

'What am I to say?' asked the rector despairingly. 'I must write to Josephine. She is in great trouble. As for your theory, I don't hold it. There is give and take in all married life. Bless me! do you think Mrs Sellwood and I agreed together from the first like bread and butter? Cable and Josephine have not been together three months, and are they to fly apart at the first tiff!'

'There is give and take where the joining is between two cut the same way, weft or woof. Then when one pulls, the other gives.'

'Mrs Sellwood and I had our tiffs. Why—I remember distinctly the second week of our marriage, she—that is, I— Well, never mind particulars; we were both in the wrong. It was a rainy day, and horribly cold, at Mürren, several thousand feet above the sea, and in close proximity to glaciers. Nothing to do; no books but odd volumes of Tauchnitz; no heating apparatus in our room. I wrapped myself up in a *duvet* and stood at one window looking out into the rain; and she wrapped herself up in a *duvet* and looked out at the rain from another window; and we would not speak to each other. We were both cold, both cross, and both in the wrong, and ashamed, or too proud to own it. I thought then I had made a mistake in marrying her, and I believe a very similar idea lodged in her head. It was wet and clammy and cold in our room, that detestable day at the *Hôtel du Silberhorn* at Mürren. I know that I used my pocket-handkerchief, and so did she. We were all right again next day, when the sun shone. I got up early and picked her a bunch of Edelweiss and gentians; and she—she mended one of my braces for me which I had broken out. We made it up then.—I have no patience with Cable; he must come round. Why, he can't be in a more miserably uncomfortable con-

dition than I was that morning at Mürren, scrambling about after Alpine flowers—wearing one suspender!’

Bessie shook her head. The cases were hardly analogous.

‘Josephine is humbled,’ he went on. ‘There is infinite good in the dear girl; but she has been mismanaged—I will not say by whom. She has—she always has had a true and sound heart; but she has been allowed her own way too much, and permitted to exercise her temper without check. She is headstrong, because she has been almost forced by circumstances to decide on her own course for herself; but she is a true woman—a true woman,’ repeated the old rector, standing up. ‘I’m the last to conceal, to deny her faults; but—there is sterling stuff in her. She’s a dear girl, a good girl.’ He walked to the window and looked out. Presently he came back to the table. ‘Look here, Mrs Cable. Do you suppose that I have not had crows to pluck with Josephine? I do not mind confiding to you—but let it go no further—that I have had a crow as big as an albatross and as black as pitch to pluck with her. She hurt me where I am most sensitive to pain. Are you aware that my boy proposed to her, and that she refused him—threw him over for your Richard? A father has feelings. He is proud of his son, when that son is good and has not cost him an hour of uneasiness; and a father turns somewhat rusty against a young hussy who snaps her fingers in his face. But I forgive her. Indeed, I may say that I value her infinitely higher now than I did before.—Do you know those horrible little pieces of money one gets in Austria—ten and twenty *kreuzer* bits, of base metal washed over with silver? They look very well when new; but with use, the silver rapidly rubs off, and you get the tarnished brass beneath. A lot of women are like that; and the rub and turn about, the daily friction of married life, brushes away all the external gloss and plate. With Josephine, it is just the reverse—the brass is the outer work, and the sterling silver below. Why, is Cable to be angry and cast her away because of the brass? Let him take her and try her, and he will soon come on the precious metal.’ He rang the bell. ‘Excuse me; I must have another glass of cognac. That *Maggie* beer—two pints was too much. I shall be quite upset.—But, Mrs Cable, I leave it to you to reason with your son. He rolls himself up like a hedgehog when I come near and breathe a word about Josephine. He does not know what a treasure he has got in her. Tell him that I envy him his possession. I should be glad if my son had her instead.—Bless my soul! does he want his wife to be a turnip or a mangold? I suppose you never heard of Rübezahl, the mountain spirit, did you? who carried off a princess, and to supply her with companions and ladies-in-waiting, transformed turnips into young damsels. Let me tell you, and tell Cable through you, that the manufacture continues at a brisk rate. I have met scores of young ladies who were, I could swear, nothing but transformed turnips. Josephine is not one of these; she has character—she is a real woman.—I am warm—it is not the brandy, it is my feelings which heat me.’

‘You see, sir, the difficulty is that both of them are strong-willed in their own ways.’

‘But Josephine is bent now on doing what is right.—Judge for yourself, Mrs Cable. When she learned who Richard really was, at once, without consulting me or Mrs Sellwood or any one, she made up her mind that she had no right to Mr Gotham’s property. She would not have Richard enriched through her, but be herself enriched through him. She makes over everything absolutely to him. Is not that a proof of determination and of right principle?’

‘In the first place,’ answered Mrs Cable, ‘let me say that I am quite sure Richard will not accept the property. I would not myself touch a penny of it; and he shares my pride. If his father did not choose to acknowledge him, Richard will accept nothing of what he has left. I am as sure of that as if I heard Richard say so.’

‘But—will not Josephine’s disinterestedness touch him? He must see how right-minded she is.’

Bessie shook her head. ‘Mr Sellwood,’ she said, after thinking deeply for a few minutes, ‘I allow she must be strong to decide to do this. But strength in her will never touch Richard and bring him to take her in his arms again. It is weakness, and not strength, that appeals to him. He is a man with the heart of a mother. You do not understand. A mother will let herself be cut to pieces rather than that the feeblest child she bears should be hurt. The feeblest child, the more she loves it—the more she will endure for it. The more the child frets and cries, the greater her devotion to it. There are men with mothers’ hearts, men who may admire what is strong, but are touched, and who love only what is weak.’ She shook her head again. ‘No; only in weakness can Josephine recover him. When Gabriel Gotham was rich and at his ease, I nursed my pride and my resentment; but when he was dying, with no one that loved him by, no one even to care for him, to hold his head and wipe the sweat from his brow—then I could not hold out any longer; all my pride went down like a tent when the pole gives way. I know Richard, and I see my own nature in him. He is purposeful, and will not be turned when he has set his head in one direction.’

‘At all events,’ said Mr Sellwood, ‘you will let him know what Josephine has done. Impress on him that she has made over everything to him. Whether he chooses to take it or not, all that Mr Gotham bequeathed to him is now your son’s. If he refuses to take it—it accumulates for his children. Josephine only delays to hear what I have to tell her about Richard Cable, before executing the requisite deeds. Tell your son that he must appoint some one as his agent, to look after the estate, and care-keepers to take charge of the house, for Josephine will vacate the Hall and leave Hanford.’

Mrs Cable remained thinking, with composed face and a stern look, usual with her, on her brow. ‘I will tell him the main matter,’ she said after a long consideration; ‘but all the particulars you must tell him to-morrow. I will go to him now and prepare him. You come, sir, if you will be so good, in the morning and see him.’ She rose in her dignified manner, made an old-fashioned courtesy, and left the room.

When she had gone, the rector put his hands under his coat-tails and walked about the room. 'After having been bitten by a mad dog,' he said to himself, 'the best thing to do is to run or walk till one drops, so as to work off the poison from the veins. I'll do the same with that *Magpie* ale. I feel it in me still. I'll go out. And, by the way, I'll see if there be any toyshops in the place where I can get some twopenny trifles to amuse the little Cables to-morrow.'

On reaching the *Magpie*, Bessie Cable went directly to her son's room and discharged the obligation she had taken on herself. She told what she had to say plainly without comment, confining herself to the bare narration.

Richard listened without interrupting her. His face had acquired some of the sternness which hers had gathered during years of trouble and self-compression. It was now very stern. When she had done, he spoke in reply with a firm voice: 'Mother, I will have none of my father's possessions, because he never called me son. It is indifferent to me what She may decide, how she may dispose of them. Neither she nor his possessions concern me.'

Mrs Cable breathed freely. Her son thought in the matter of the Hanford estate like herself. She had felt convinced he would so think; but it was a satisfaction to her to hear him so express himself.

After a short pause, he went on: 'Mother, I will not stay another day here. Whilst you have been absent, I have called up Jacob Corye, and I have told him that we would all leave to-morrow.'

'It is impossible.'

'We all leave to-morrow for St Kerian. I will not stay here. The parson has followed and found us, and *She* will be coming next. I know she will. She only waits to hear that he has seen us, that she may come and see us also.'

'She is very sorry, thoroughly repentant. She sends you her humble love.'

'I refuse her love, as I refuse the Hanford estate. I will not see her again. I cannot forgive her. I will not forgive her. I should hate her as much if she came kneeling to me as if she came scoffing at me. She is false and cruel. I always thought that was a queer passage in Scripture about the unpardonable sin. I can understand it now. She has sinned the sin unto death against me, and I will never forgive her in this world or the next.' His eyes began to flame with wrath again; the mention of Josephine was like the poking of the fire in a forge—it made the glare and heat break forth in spurts and sparks.

'Richard,' said his mother, 'you cannot go to-morrow.'

'Go, I will,' he said, moving impatiently in his bed. 'I have ordered Jacob Corye to get me a wagon with trusses of straw; and I will lie on them, and the children can sit about me and in the corners. I shall go mad if I stay here, thinking every moment that I hear her hand on the door, her foot on the stair, and that next moment I should see her come into my room. If she came—lame though I be, I would leap out of the window to escape her.'

'Richard!'

'I cannot stay here. I must go to St Kerian to the house that belongs to us. That at least

will be my own home; there I can be master, and shut the door in her face, if she dares to pursue me thither. Here I am in an inn, and an inn-door is open to every one.'

'Richard,' said Bessie Cable gravely, 'are you afraid of her?'

He did not answer for a moment, but at last he said: 'I always was afraid of her, from the moment I saw her when we were cast on the sandbank.'

'No, Richard,' said Mrs Cable suddenly, 'it is not true. You are not afraid of her. You are afraid of your own self. You love her still, as much as ever; and I say—she will conquer you—yet. I cannot see into the future; God knows how. Perhaps, as your father conquered me, through weakness; but the time will come, as it came to me. She will conquer you, in spite of all you set up between you, all your turning away, all your anger and resentment; she will conquer you—yet.'

WAR INDEMNITIES.

THE rapidity with which countries recover from the ravages of war has attracted the attention of most political economists. The phenomenon was first explained by Dr Chalmers; and since his time, explanations more or less similar to that given by him have found their way into most of the current economical text-books. A point, however, closely connected with this, and which has received less consideration than it deserves, is the great facility with which a vanquished nation has sometimes been able to pay an apparently ruinous fine which a victorious enemy has imposed upon it. By far the most striking example on record is the case of France after the war of 1870-71. The Germans, not satisfied with the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, insisted that France should pay the cost of the campaign, as a losing litigant pays the costs of a lawsuit; and a fine amounting to the enormous sum of five milliards of francs, or two hundred million pounds sterling, was exacted, the German troops remaining in occupation of a part of the French territory until the last farthing of it was paid. One would naturally have supposed that, to a country already crushed and prostrate, this would have been a blow from which it would have taken generations to recover, and that the payment of such an indemnity would have taxed to the utmost the financial resources even of so rich a nation as France. The astonishment of Europe was therefore great when it was seen that not only was the indemnity easily and quickly paid, but that the financial condition of France was, at the end of a few years, more prosperous than that of her rival. So evident, indeed, was this, even to the Germans themselves, that it was humorously proposed by a writer in a German periodical that when Germany next beat France, the French should be compelled to receive, instead of paying, a fine of two hundred million pounds.

We have now to consider the causes of this singular phenomenon, and in doing so it is necessary to advert to the peculiar economic position in which, twenty years ago, France was placed. The bulk of the population consisted then, as now, of small proprietors, a class whose industry and thrift are proverbial, but which is not remarkable for its general education or intelligence. The

banking system of the country was in a backward state, and joint-stock Companies were far less common than in England. A French peasant proprietor, therefore, who had saved a little money beyond what he could profitably invest in the improvement of his farm, was utterly at a loss as to what he should do with it, and in his perplexity, he usually buried it in the floor, or hid it in the wall or roof, of his cottage. Thus, a large part of those funds which, in countries that have reached a higher point of economic development than France had then attained to, are deposited in banks and invested in commercial enterprises, was lying, like the buried talent in the parable, useless alike to its owner and to mankind.

It was evident that any event which should induce the millions of French proprietors to draw forth their hidden hoards and place them out at interest would be a benefit to them and, through them, to their country. The extent, however, to which the country as a whole would benefit by such an occurrence would depend upon the nature of the investment which induced the peasants to lend their money; if it were a productive undertaking, the country would gain largely; if an unproductive one, it would gain little, or not at all. But even if the undertaking were unproductive, the country would be no worse off than before, because the money spent upon it would not represent capital withdrawn from a profitable employment. The necessity of paying two hundred million pounds to clear the soil of France of the German invader was an event exactly calculated to produce the above result. An appeal was made at once to the cupidity and to the patriotism of the French peasantry. They were offered interest by the government for their hidden gold, and were told that by lending it they would help to shorten the period of German occupation. The gold came forth from its hiding-places, was lent to the French government, and was paid over by it to the Germans. The total result to France has been that the French taxpayer is now paying, and the owners of the hoarded gold are now receiving, interest upon so much of the indemnity loan as was subscribed out of these hidden hoards. One set of Frenchmen are paying interest to another set of Frenchmen; the hoarded gold has gone to Germany, and in other respects the country is in the same position as if the indemnity had never been exacted. It seems a paradoxical assertion, but it is nevertheless a true one, that not only was the payment of this gigantic fine little injury, but it was even in a certain sense a benefit to the people of France. The country was, economically, in a backward state; the various forms of credit were little known, and the peasantry were afraid to trust their money out of their own possession. They have now learnt that they can lend it safely and profitably to their own government, and this has inspired them with confidence to deposit their money in banks and to lend it to joint-stock Companies to a much greater degree than was usual before 1870.

The advantages which arise from lending and borrowing—that is, from credit—are similar to those which arise from all exchanges. A has what B wants, and B has what A wants. They exchange, and each is better off than before.

Similarly, A has one hundred pounds which he cannot himself employ profitably, but B could employ it profitably if A would lend it; A lends it, and receives interest out of the profit which the use of it enables B to make, and both are better off than before the loan was effected. Credit of this kind is the very life of commerce; and whatever encourages legitimate credit is an advantage to a nation in trade, just as an improved weapon is an advantage to it in war. 'Neither a borrower nor a lender be,' may have been excellent advice for Polonius to give Laertes when leaving Elsinore to complete his education in Paris; but a nation which acts on it as a commercial maxim will be left far behind in the race of industrial competition. France was in great danger of being so left behind, and from this danger the necessity of paying the German indemnity contributed in no small degree to deliver her. It was, in fact, a blessing which came in the guise of a disaster.

Let us now turn our attention to Germany, and consider the effect produced in that country by the influx of French gold. Part of it was used to restore the currency; part was hoarded for military purposes; but a large part was expended in constructing fortifications and on other public enterprises. So much of it as was spent in this last way flowed into the channels of circulation and caused an inflation of prices. This rise of prices was mistaken by the mercantile part of the community for a rise proceeding from other causes, and one of those speculative fevers set in which almost invariably terminate in a commercial crisis. It would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to determine whether the country lost more by reason of the crisis than it gained by the command which such a mass of gold gave it over the wealth of other nations; but this much is certain, that the blessing was a mixed one, and that just as the French lost less, so the Germans gained less, than a careless observer might have supposed.

An interesting and deeply important question—we mean, important in a speculative point of view, for we trust it will be long indeed before it becomes a practical question—will here perhaps occur to our readers: What would the effect be upon England were she called upon to pay a heavy ransom to a victorious invader? Would her vast wealth not enable her to do so with at least as little sacrifice as France incurred in 1871? We think the answer must be in the negative. The case of England is widely different from that of France. Except the reserve of the Bank of England, the country contains no metallic hoard; and that reserve, besides being very small in comparison with the sum paid by France to Germany, is not an idle or useless hoard. All the petty savings of even the poorest classes in England are collected, and either deposited in banks or invested in joint-stock Companies and Friendly Societies. Our system of credit has been elaborated to such a degree that it is now so delicate, so sensitive, and so complicated, as to form one of the greatest marvels of modern civilisation; and by means of it we are able to carry on a gigantic trade without using more of the precious metals for currency purposes than the amount required for small retail transactions. It is evident that a

country such as this, having no private hoards to fall back on, has three ways, and three only, of meeting any large external demand: it can send abroad its metallic currency; it can export the metallic reserve of the Bank of England; or it can send commodities. No other means of liquidating such a demand exists, or can be conceived; and to liquidate it in any of these three ways would be a heavy blow to the nation. To export our metallic currency would make it necessary to substitute for it an inconvertible paper currency, which would be to follow the worst financial precedents and to return to the dark days of the Bank Restriction. To export the Bank reserve would make it necessary to authorise a suspension of specie payments by the Bank of England, and would be an expedient similar in principle to an issue of government paper, and but little less mischievous in degree. The third course—that of exporting commodities equal in value to the indemnity we had to pay—would be by far the least objectionable mode in which we could meet the demand; but it is hardly necessary to point out that to hand over to an invader two hundred million pounds-worth of useful commodities is a very different thing from paying him (as France did) that same sum out of gold which was lying idle.

To what conclusion, then, do these reflections lead? We think to this one: a nation which has reached a high point of economic civilisation, in which credit is completely organised, and the use of metallic currency, except for retail transactions, almost entirely dispensed with, and in which the small savings of individuals are collected, and profitably employed, by banks and similar institutions, will always find greater difficulty in paying a war indemnity than a nation in an earlier stage of economic development, in which the savings of the thrifty poor take the form of a metallic hoard, and in which the metallic currency is very large. A nation of the former kind having no hoard of idle money to draw upon, must meet the demand out of money which is serving some useful purpose, or else by exporting commodities; and the national capital must suffer a *pro tanto* diminution. A miser from whom a highwayman takes one thousand sovereigns is not really worse off than he was; but a merchant who is robbed of the same sum has lost capital equal in value to one thousand pounds.

A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.—CONCLUSION.

DR WYNYARD began the conversation by informing Miss Brock of his plans for her residence with his mother. She said little, but he could see that she was pleased; and rather wondered why she should be so. His vanity was not sufficient to make him suspect that the thought in the lady's mind was that the mother of a good man ought to be a good woman; and yet that idea, or something like it, was what passed through Miss Brock's brain.

'You look rather grave, Dr Wynyard; I hope nothing is the matter?'

'Nothing but a rather difficult question of conscience as regards your affairs,' said the

doctor. 'I want to consult you about it—that is, if you feel equal to talking over money matters.'

'I shall be very glad to do so; but I doubt if I can be of much help,' said the girl simply. —'Won't you sit down, Dr Wynyard?'

He did so, and proceeded to give her a concise account of her father's instructions, and his own opinions thereupon, not omitting the lawyer's remarks. Indeed, Wynyard felt that insensibly he was making the best case he could for the expediency of carrying out the will. The girl only interrupted him once or twice, and then her questions were very pertinent. When he had finished, she meditated a little, and then delivered her opinion.

'I think I quite understand now, Dr Wynyard. You must know so much better than I can. But for my own part, I have no doubt at all upon the subject.'

'Have you not?' said Wynyard hopefully. 'Then you think I may invest your money with a clear conscience?'

'O no!' said the girl. 'That was not what I meant at all. There is a verse in the Bible that seems to me to be perfectly clear on the subject. May I show it to you?'

Wynyard made a sign of assent, wondering what was coming next. Miss Brock took a Bible from the table and turned over the leaves quickly. 'Here it is!' she said, and read in her clear young voice the words of Solomon: 'It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.' —'Is not that exactly what we should be doing, Dr Wynyard?'

'I suppose so,' said the doctor, rather unwillingly; 'but we should not be decrying the value of the shares by buying them—rather the contrary indeed.'

'Well,' said the girl with great simplicity, 'I should have thought that the cases were the same; but of course you know best.'

'I don't think I do, at all,' said Wynyard honestly. 'It is very possible that if there were not so much money at stake, my opinion might agree with yours. But you must not make up your mind all at once like this; I want you to think it over quietly. Your income, if we do not carry out your father's plan, will be a little over three hundred pounds a year; whereas, if we do carry it out and succeed in selling our shares at twenty pounds each, it will be somewhere near six thousand pounds a year. Do you understand what that means?'

'I know so little of money,' answered the girl musingly. 'Even three hundred pounds a year seems a great deal. But in any case, surely, Dr Wynyard, it cannot alter the question of right and wrong?'

'Certainly not,' Wynyard acquiesced. The simple Christianity of his ward, and a lurking feeling that his own conscience agreed with her,

were too strong for him to attempt to argue the point at present. But he determined to gain time. 'Well, Miss Brock,' he said, 'will you think it over well, and let me know what decision you come to, next time I see you? I hope to be able to bring you a cordial invitation from my mother to-morrow, and then we can decide finally.'

'But what am I to think over, please?' asked the girl. 'If it be the right or wrong of the matter, I cannot see that there can be any question at all.'

'Well, would you mind talking it over with Mr Walker the lawyer?' asked Wynyard, with a keen sense of his moral cowardice in shifting the burden of argument on to the shoulders of another man.

'Not at all, if you wish it,' Miss Brock replied. And Wynyard, not daring to face the lawyer again in person, went into the parlour and wrote a note to Mr Walker asking him to call at Cullercoats; and then started himself on a tour of medical visits in the neighbourhood, with a mind decidedly dissatisfied with his morning's work, but with a much increased store of admiration for his ward. John Wynyard admired Miss Brock for having conquered him so completely by her simple clearness of conscience.

Next morning, Wynyard, as he had expected, received a letter from his mother containing a most cordial invitation for Miss Brock, and announcing the writer's intention of coming up to Tynemouth that same day for the purpose of making the girl's acquaintance and escorting her down to Kent. As Wynyard read it, he felt proud of his mother—not for the first time—and he thought with pleasure of the effect which her kindness would have on his lonely ward. He found he would require to be at the Tynemouth railway station about two o'clock to meet Mrs Wynyard, and rang for his landlady to order dinner to be ready for the traveller. But just as he pulled the bell handle, the door opened and Mr Walker entered, and flung himself into a chair. He seemed decidedly put out about something, and Wynyard guessed what was coming. 'You are a nice sort of a man, doctor,' he said, 'to send me to Cullercoats to argue with a young lady, who is without exception the greatest simpleton I have ever met; and that is saying a good deal! I thought you were foolish enough yesterday, but at least you did not quote texts of Scripture at me.'

'And she did, then?' said Wynyard, laughing.

'Whole chapters she would have given me, if I had let her! But I soon stopped that. I said, if she found fifty texts it would not affect the case in point, which was a matter of ordinary business, and not to be judged by high moral rules of right and wrong. She said, her opinion, which she only offered for what it was worth, was, that every act, however small, was to be judged by these rules. I replied that, in that

case, there was no use in my arguing the question further; and that, as she was not of age, she must leave her trustee to act as he thought best. She said: "Certainly. I am sure Dr Wynyard will do what is right."—"I am not, then, young lady," I said. And so I came away.'

'I am not sure that you did not get the worst of it, Walker,' said Wynyard.

'Nonsense!' said the lawyer.—'Now, look here, doctor. I have thought the matter over, and I am quite clear upon it. You can do as you like about your own money; but the trust money you must invest as the will directs. You have no option in the matter as a trustee.'

Here the landlady entered, and the lawyer fumed in silence whilst Wynyard was giving her his orders. When she left the room, the doctor turned to him, with a grave face now, and spoke: 'If I must invest the trust money in the St Vrain's mine, at least there is nothing in the will preventing me from writing to the directors before, instead of after.'

The lawyer, for once in his life, was really startled. 'You don't mean it? You wouldn't be such a fool? Don't you realise what that would mean? You would simply make a present of a few hundreds of thousands to the directors and their friends; and probably get about three per cent. interest for your ward out of her shares, at the price at which you would be obliged to buy in. If you do such a thing, you are perfectly mad.'

'I think I shall, for all that,' said Wynyard quietly. 'I agree with Miss Brock. I think Captain Brock's idea is scarcely honest, and certainly not what a Christian man should carry out. I shall see Miss Brock to-day; and if she be still of the same mind, I will write to the directors this evening to put myself out of the reach of temptation.'

The lawyer looked at him for a moment and then took up his hat. 'Good-morning, then, Dr Wynyard,' he said grimly. 'You will regret not taking my advice, or I am much mistaken. Under the circumstances, I suppose you have no objection to my availing myself of the opportunity which you are throwing away? I must be content to be thought a dishonest man by you and Miss Brock, but I do not think that will disturb my digestion.'

'Of course you must do as you wish,' said Wynyard, rather sadly. 'But, Walker, do not let me lose my friend as well as my prospects. You do not know how hard it has been for me to give up such a chance as I shall never have again.'

'If I were sure that you were in your right senses, I might be angry,' said the lawyer. 'As it is, I still hope that you may think better of it. Meanwhile, with your permission, I will hurry off to secure my own shares and make myself safe in either case.'

Wynyard watched him as he crossed the street, with a decided feeling in his own mind that Christianity was a hard creed to live up to in the nineteenth century. But he was a man who, having once made his decision, was not easily shaken; and moreover, to tell the whole truth, the commendation for which he looked

from Miss Brock was a strong factor in the case. Still, he gave a long sigh as he closed the door and returned to the half-furnished room which was now likely to be his home for many years to come.

Mrs Wynyard's train arrived in good time; and after dinner, mother and son walked out together to Cullercoats. Miss Brock was there to meet them; and Mrs Wynyard's keen eyes noticed that the girl cast a quick inquiring look upon the doctor before she greeted her lady visitor. The preliminaries were readily arranged, the ladies having thoroughly congenial natures, and each being only anxious to save the other trouble. Mrs Wynyard was obliged to return home the next day, and Miss Brock was sure she could easily be ready in time to accompany her. When all was settled, Wynyard begged a few minutes' private conversation with his ward on matters of business; and his mother discreetly withdrew, wondering meanwhile what the nature of the urgent business could be that required her absence.

'Are you still of the same mind as regards those shares, Miss Brock?' asked Wynyard, when they found themselves alone.

'I am indeed,' the girl answered. 'But as neither you nor Mr Walker agrees with me, perhaps I may be wrong.'

'I do agree with you thoroughly,' said the doctor. 'I was not sure about it yesterday; but you have convinced me. Still, as it is a great temptation to both of us, had I not better write a letter to the directors at once, and put it out of our power to alter the decision we have come to?'

'Oh, please do!' said the girl, clasping her hands. 'It has haunted me ever since you spoke of it—I was so afraid that you would not see things as I did. And last night, I had such a terrible dream! I thought we had bought the shares, and that I was a rich woman, sitting in a grand drawing-room in a house of my own; and suddenly the door opened, and a long procession filed in of men, women, and children, dressed in rags, and looking so thin and wretched; and something seemed to tell me that all these people would have been living in comfort now, had I not bought their shares and deprived them of their rights. They all stood there and looked at me, and I felt that if they spoke I should die. So I suppose I woke with the fright; and I dared not go to sleep again.'

'It was a remarkable dream,' said Wynyard, smiling to himself at the idea of what Mr Walker's contempt would have been for it, had it been told him. 'I have brought the papers with me; so, if you will let me use your desk, I will draw up my letter forthwith, and you shall post it yourself, if you like.'

'I think I will, if I may,' said the girl. 'It is so nice to feel, once a letter is in the post, that it must go, and that you cannot stop it.—Here is a pen and ink. May I go and tell your mother about it while you write?'

'Certainly,' said Wynyard. 'There can be no secret about it now.'

As he was writing the last words of the important letter, his mother came in alone and kissed him softly on the forehead. 'I have heard all about it, John,' she said. 'Of course you were

quite right, both of you. She is a noble girl, John; when am I to have her for a daughter-in-law?'

The doctor looked up in his mother's face and, seeing a twinkle in her eyes, blushed guiltily. He made no answer, however, but continued his writing. When the letter was finished and the envelope sealed, Miss Brock was again in the room with her walking things on; and the three went out together, and dropped it in the slit of the letter-box of the first pillar they came to.

'There is an end of two hundred thousand pounds,' said Wynyard, somewhat dolefully.

'And the beginning of a new life,' whispered his mother in his ear.

A hot July afternoon, and two lovers sitting under the shade of a convenient walnut tree in an old walled garden in Kent.

'Show me your watch, John,' the girl is saying.

'This is about the twentieth time you have seen it, Mary.'

'Well, I love looking at it and at the inscription; and I am going to read the latter aloud now, to punish you: "From the Directors and Shareholders of the St Vrain's Mining Company (Limited), as a mark of their appreciation of the honourable and disinterested conduct of John Wynyard, Esq. M.D."—You must feel proud of that; I know I do.'

'Indeed, I do not feel proud,' said Wynyard musingly—'only humiliated that my Christianity was so weak that I ever had any doubt as to what I should do. You never had, dear.'

'It was so much easier for me, John. I never felt the need of money in my life, and three hundred pounds a year seemed absolute riches to me.'

'It will be nearer one thousand pounds a year than three hundred pounds, I hope,' said the doctor. 'Even at the high rate at which I had to buy in, those shares are paying well. Mr Walker the lawyer has made a fortune and retired from business. What fools he must think us, Mary.'

'Never mind what he thinks,' said the girl quickly. 'I do not envy him his money—not in the least. We shall have plenty to live upon, and you will be able to take a London practice now; will you not?'

'I might,' said the doctor.—'And yet, do you know it still goes very hard with my pride to think it will be with my wife's money, and not my own, that I must purchase it?'

'What does it matter, if you love me, John?' asked Mary simply.

'You are too much for me, as usual,' he replied, smiling. 'If you give yourself to me and I accept you, I suppose I need not mind taking your money too. But people will talk, you know. A poor guardian who marries a rich ward cannot expect to find much quarter.'

'I am not your ward now, at all events,' said Mary playfully. 'I am lawfully of age, and have a right to dispose of myself and my property just as I think fit; and what is more, I shall expect you to obey me.'

'I did that before, if you remember,' said Wynyard.

'And never regretted it?' she asked, looking up in his face with an expression of perfect confidence as to what his response would be.

'Never!' he answered.

MEN OF ONE IDEA.

POE has observed that every man has a pet word or phrase which he uses frequently (the 'impalpable inane' of Carlyle and the 'lucidity' of Matthew Arnold are instances in point); and it is almost equally certain that every man has a pet idea. In some, it is difficult to discover what that one idea is; in others, it is very prominent. The desire to master one's trade or profession is, we need hardly say, very laudable; but when a man has no thoughts for anything else, and cannot open his mouth without talking 'shop,' he is simply an intolerable bore. Lord Beaconsfield, indeed, defines the true bore as 'that man who thinks the world is only interested in one subject, because he can only comprehend one.'

Most notable men are handed down to posterity by their one idea; but there are many exceptions to this rule. We are told of a celebrated comedian who, by some strange infatuation, thought himself destined to excel in tragedy, and was much mortified when on benefit nights he played Romeo and the audience insisted on receiving it as a burlesque. The one idea of Charles Reade is well known. He was not content with his fame as a novelist, but wanted to become famous as a dramatist also; and there are a few living authors who are quite as ambitious.

Probably one of the most remarkable men of one idea was Lord Palmerston, who could think of little else but foreign politics. An amusing story is told of him in the *Greville Memoirs*. 'The Queen,' says Greville, 'told Clarendon an anecdote of Palmerston, showing how exclusively absorbed he is with foreign politics. Her Majesty had been much interested in and alarmed at the strikes and troubles in the north, and asked Palmerston for details about them, when she found that he knew nothing at all. One morning, after previous inquiries, she said to him: "Pray, Lord Palmerston, have you any news?" To which he replied: "No, madam; I have heard nothing; but it seems certain the Turks have crossed the Danube."' The fact that Palmerston at this time was not Foreign Minister, but Home Secretary, adds point to the anecdote.

Some of our judges are men of one idea. A short time ago, a learned judge had never heard the name of one of the most popular actors of the day; and another asked, 'What is baccarat?' which had been mentioned in the course of a case heard before him. At length, however, there are signs that their lordships are becoming conscious of what is going on in the world, and that they occasionally glance through a newspaper. When one of the counsel in a recent case called Mr J. L. Toole, and said, 'You are known as Mr J. L. Toole, the lessee of Toole's Theatre,' the Lord Chief-justice triumphantly exclaimed: 'We all know that.' This is certainly a hopeful sign.

There are certain well-known types of men of one idea—such as the 'horsey' man. Many of

them are not quite so bad as Smedley's well-known character, who assured his 'dear Fanny' that

There are moments
When love gets you in a fix,
Takes the bit in his jaws, and, without any pause,
Bolts away with you like bricks.

But, as a rule, their talk is of the turf, turf. Sydney Smith's son, who was known as 'Smith the Assassin,' was, according to Mr Serjeant Ballantine, a man of this class. Late on in life, he entertained gloomy thoughts of the future. 'On one occasion,' Mr Ballantine says, 'when he was about to meet the Bishop of London at dinner, his reverend father suggested to him the propriety of exhibiting to that distinguished prelate his familiarity with the Scriptures. Accordingly, he seized upon the earliest opportunity to ask his lordship "whether anything was known of the condition Nebuchadnezzar was in when he came up from grass."'

With the men who are apt to look at everything from a pecuniary standpoint and whose whole aim in life is to amass money, we are all familiar. As the worship of mammon has been condemned by writers and divines of all ages, and as this phase of our subject is decidedly hackneyed, we shall content ourselves with relating a story of one of these men of one idea. General Skobelev, according to the story, was working one evening in his tent near the Danube, or near a pond, when a Turkish bomb dropped at the threshold of his tent. The general had just time to see the sentry outside stoop down and throw the shell into the water. Skobelev approached the soldier and said: 'Do you know you have saved my life?' 'I have done my best, general,' was the reply.—'Very well. Which would you rather have, the St George's Cross or one hundred roubles?' The sentinel hesitated a moment, and then said: 'What is the value of the St George's Cross, my general?'—'What do you mean? The cross itself is of no value; it may be worth five roubles perhaps; but it is an honour to possess it.' 'Well, my general,' said the soldier, 'if it is like that, give me ninety-five roubles and the Cross of St George!' The sentry, it should be noted, was a Jew, with a fine Semitic profile.

Another class of men of one idea are those who have little or no knowledge of modern literature, and who think that all the 'wit and wisdom of the world are concentrated in some fifty antique volumes.' Take an illustration from an anecdote told regarding Thackeray. Before the great novelist could deliver his lecture on English Humorists at Oxford, it was necessary to obtain the license of the authorities. The deputy-chancellor at Oxford, upon whom Thackeray waited, knew nothing about such trifles as *Vanity Fair*. 'Pray, what can I do to serve you?' said this bland functionary.

'My name is Thackeray.'

'So I see by this card.'

'I seek permission to lecture within the precincts.'

'Ah! You are a lecturer. What subjects do you undertake—religious or political?'

'Neither. I am a literary man.'

'Have you written anything?'

'Yes; I am the author of *Vanity Fair*.'

'I presume, a Dissenter. Has that anything to do with John Bunyan's book?'

'Not exactly. I have also written *Pendennis*.'

'Never heard of those works; but do not doubt they are proper books.'

'I have also contributed to *Punch*.'

'*Punch*? I have heard of that. Is it not a ribald publication?'

There are many other classes of men of one idea, to enumerate the whole of which is no part of our intention. A person does not need a wide circle of acquaintances to know at least one man who is absorbed in but one subject. When two men of one idea are thrown together—in a railway carriage, for instance—and both endeavour to ride their favourite hobby, the result is amusing—to a third party. The men themselves may, however, be anything but amused, and may part with scarcely a flattering idea of each other's abilities.

THE DEVIL'S SCRAUGH.

BY AN ARTILLERY OFFICER.

I.

In the year 187— I was quartered at Athlone, in the County Westmeath, Ireland. It is not a bad military station—for an Irish one—especially for a man who cares for outdoor sports. There are good fishing and boating on Lough Ree; and by the kindness of the landowners of the neighbourhood, many a day's good shooting of a miscellaneous kind may be had over the interminable bogs that lie all around. I enjoyed myself greatly, having a taste for solitary shooting excursions, and liking that uncertainty as to what bird or quadruped would next rise from the heather, which is chiefly to be found in Irish sport. Generally, I started on such expeditions alone, save for the company of a smart young gossoon of the town, Peter Farrell by name, who, having been born with the national love of shooting and fishing, was only too glad to accompany me for a nominal consideration, and make himself useful in pointing out the 'mearnes' which divided the properties of different owners, sometimes consisting in a narrow trench running for miles through a bog, and sometimes of an imaginary line, which I had to accept in faith, not being able to see a trace of it for myself. He also carried my game-bag, and would think nothing of a twelve-mile tramp over spongy bog-land with a couple of hares over his shoulder and a full bag at his side.

One November afternoon we had gone farther abroad than usual, and reached a bog on which I had never been before. Peter declared he knew it well; but I rather doubted the statement. We had had a very fair day's sport, and it was getting time to think of returning home, as the short winter daylight was drawing to a close. I had an idea that a short-cut might be made to reach the high-road by holding a due north-west course; but Peter inclined to a south-westerly one. The argument ran high, when at length we discerned a cottage with a thatched roof at the bottom of a hollow where the high bog-land sloped downwards to the banks of a stream.

I sent Peter down to the cottage to inquire the way, and meanwhile directed my steps towards

a little pool of water, some hundred yards in diameter, which I perceived at a few furlongs off, and on which I hoped to surprise a stray teal or wild-duck. Sure enough, there was a flock of the former birds feeding in fancied security near the edge. I selected a stunted thorn-bush growing on the margin as a good shelter behind which to approach them unperceived, and began stealthily advancing under its cover. The pond was surrounded by a large patch of light-green moss; and as soon as I stepped upon it, I became aware that it was what is called, in Irish parlance, a 'shaking scraugh'; that is to say, the water was here covered only by a floating mass of weeds and peat-moss, closely interlaced, and forming a curious combination, that was neither bog nor yet terra firma. As you walk upon such a place, it sinks beneath you, and you see a wave running along before you just as when you shake a carpet. However, there is generally little danger of breaking through, so closely matted together are the fibres, and I advanced with caution, bent on having my shot. Suddenly, without the least warning, my foot went through, and in an instant I was up to my neck in the black, peaty water beneath, just keeping my head above the surface by the bearing my outspread arms had on the moss. It was a terrible situation! If once I sank, no power on earth could save me—it would be like drowning under ice, only that, ice being transparent, there would be some hope of being cut out in that case; and here, under the mossy blanket, absolutely none. I shouted at the top of my voice for help, but with a painful conviction that if it did not come within three minutes, it would be too late, as I felt myself slowly sinking.

Suddenly I felt something thrust through the collar of my coat from behind, and heard a man's voice saying coolly: 'I have a good hold on ye with the graip now, your honour; if you make a good offer at it, you can scramble out!'

Most comforting were the words, in my desperate case. I made a violent struggle, vigorously assisted by my unknown friend with his 'graip' (a sort of three-pronged drag, which he had inserted under my collar). The cloth held; and I scrambled on to my knees, and in that ignominious position, with my clothes streaming with the black water, reached the comparatively firm ground of the bog.

'Musha, then, your honour is badly off for sport, when you must look for it in the Devil's Scraugh!' said my preserver, as I turned to look him in the face.

He was a strong, burly, Irish peasant, clad in the costume that is now rapidly becoming extinct—a chimney-pot hat, a frieze coat, knee-breeches, and gray worsted stockings. His features were striking, I thought—bushy black eyebrows meeting each other over the nose; gray keen eyes; a mouth that seemed like a straight line drawn across the face, so tightly were the lips compressed; and a square chin, with a week's growth of bristly black beard upon it. Altogether, not the sort of man you would care to have for an enemy.

'I am really very grateful to you,' said I. 'If you had not pulled me out when you did, I could not possibly have kept my head above water five minutes longer. It seems like a special

providence that you should have been there with your griap.'

My preserver scowled, and his face became less inviting than ever. 'I saw your gossoon going down the hill to the cottage beyond,' he said. 'I suppose it was to ask the way. There's no one lives there but myself, so he won't get much by his walk. If you want to get back to Athlone, just cross over the bog there where you see the tree growing its lone, and you'll strike the road. —No!'—as he saw me drawing my purse from my saturated pocket—'Turlough O'Brien wants money from no man; God forbid! When you see a shaking scraugh again, maybe you won't be so ready to venture on it!' Whereat he gave a ghastly sort of chuckle and walked off, with his griap over his shoulder, just as Peter came up. The action surprised me, as the Irish have their full share of curiosity, and rarely resist the opportunity of asking questions when they get a chance. Peter's face of dismay when he saw my wet clothes, the lake, and my new acquaintance, was a study. I wanted to look for my gun, which I had lost in my immersion; but he drew me away in great haste.

'See now, sir—never mind the gun. It's gone for ever and ever; and it's well you're not gone with it. Murther'n Irish! did ever any one see the like! And sorra a bit of me knows if we'll get home to-night at all at all, after this!'

'I've just found out where the road is,' said I. 'It is exactly where I told you—over the bog there.'

'The road, is it?' said Peter. 'Ah, then, if that were all, sorra much matter it would be. But we must only make the best of it, now we're here; and may the Holy Virgin have a care of us and be betune us and evil!' And devoutly crossing himself, he drew me away.

Needless to say that, on the way home, I demanded an explanation of him; and after a great deal of cross-examination, drew from him as curious a story as I had ever heard, and which I here give, divested of the many digressions from the point, and the rich vocabulary of Irish phrases with which it was told me.

John O'Brien, the original owner of the cottage we had seen, had two sons, Patrick and Turlough. No one knew whence he himself had come, or on what terms he had purchased the land on which he built his modest dwelling; but he appears to have been shunned by the people of the neighbourhood, chiefly on account of his living in such close proximity to the Devil's Scraugh, a place of which many wild legends had been told, and which was the favourite spot chosen by the priests wherein to confine, 'between the froth and the water,' evil spirits exorcised by them. Probably, with the exceptions of John O'Brien and his sons, there was not a man in the county who would have ventured near Lough Galliagh, as the pool was called, after dusk; and the temerity of the owners of the farm was universally ascribed to familiarity and friendship with the powers of evil.

To add to the bad reputation of the locality, a young girl, betrayed and deserted by her lover, had drowned herself in the Lough some years before the time of which I write; and the lover himself, having with tardy repentance joined eagerly in the efforts made for the recovery of the

body, was himself drowned also in the same spot, and in the presence of many of his neighbours, who were unable to rescue him, and who only succeeded in recovering the two corpses several days afterwards. There was a 'wise woman' living in a little cabin on the outskirts of Athlone, who, when she heard of the occurrence, mumbled something in Irish, and then informed her awestruck listeners that she had had a revelation, and had learned that the pool was under a spell, and would infallibly cause the death of the enemy of any one who had the courage to drown himself therein, repeating the name of the man he would doom as the black water silenced his lips for ever.

O'Brien and his sons were more shunned than ever after the event just related; but when the old man died and it was found that he had left the whole of his small possessions to his eldest son Patrick, and that Turlough was quite unprovided for, popular opinion veered round, and set in strongly in favour of the younger brother, all the dislike due to him being added to the share of Patrick. From what Peter told me of the latter man, I do not think he deserved the opprobrium which fell upon him; he seems to have been kind enough to Turlough, giving him a share of his house and of the proceeds of the land; though declining, perhaps wisely enough, to make them over to him by legal document. Turlough said little, lived in apparent friendship with his brother, and bided his time. It came earlier than he expected.

Patrick, like most of the Westmeath men at that date, was a thorough Fenian at heart, and managed to get greatly involved in the plots which led to that most abortive attempt at a rebellion, in which the government appears to have known quite as much as the conspirators themselves of the secret councils of the latter. As a natural consequence, Patrick was 'wanted,' and equally, as a matter of course, he was not to be found by the police who invaded his domicile. No one was there but Turlough, who was politeness itself, gave them a glass of whisky all round, and showed them with some pride a deed of gift from Patrick, which, in due legal form, made over to his brother Turlough the former's interest in the farm. Clearly, nothing was to be done, and the disappointed police had nothing for it but to return to barracks.

In what part of Ireland, Patrick lay hidden during the years that followed, Peter could not tell me; but it was on a spring day in 1870 that he came again, attended by certain friends of his as witnesses, to claim back the deed of gift from his brother. The seven days' wonder had passed, Ireland was quieter than usual, and there was no more talk of prosecuting ex-Fenians. The farm had only been made over to Turlough that he might manage it till better times came, and that there might be no danger of confiscation. What could be simpler than that the rightful owner should now reclaim possession. But he had reckoned without his brother. Turlough sat unmoved by the storm of passionate invective that was poured upon him, and stolidly reiterated his assertion that he had given Patrick full value for the farm, and had no intention whatever of giving it up. Words ran high, and doubtless blows would have followed, had not

Turlough at last produced an American revolver from his pocket, and threatened to shoot every man in the house—his house, if they did not at once leave it. Against such a practical argument there was nothing to be urged; and the men left the hut, carrying with them the frantic Patrick, mad with rage, and fired with a true Irish thirst for revenge.

Their road home lay by Lough Galliaugh. As they neared it, Patrick broke away from his friends, rushed across the quaking Devil's Scraugh, and plunged into the peaty water with a scream of his brother's name mingled with a ban! The party he had left stood still a moment in horror, and then hurried cautiously towards the margin of the pool. But the desperate man never rose again. Some thought that he must actually have swum under water till he was beneath the scraugh, so as to render rescue impossible and make sure of the anathema!

From that time forth no living man, could he avoid it, would approach Lough Galliaugh or speak a word to Turlough O'Brien. The latter was cut off from all human companionship, and driven to subsist on the potatoes he grew on his farm and the milk of a cow which he kept there. Whether his terrible penance did him good or not, Peter could not say, but I hoped it had done so. A man whose heart was wholly bad would have left me to perish in the scraugh.

No one had dared to attempt the finding of the corpse of Patrick O'Brien; but, almost daily for years past, Turlough had been seen working with his graip here and there along the margin of the Lough and in the Devil's Scraugh itself, so the probability was that he was endeavouring to find his brother's body—whether with a hope of avoiding the ban pronounced on the pool, or with the better object of giving Christian burial to the remains of his victim, no one could say, though, of course, the peasantry inclined to the former belief. No doubt I had met with my accident in one of the holes he had dug in the scraugh, which had had time to cover itself with a treacherous layer of weed. The popular opinion was that Turlough himself would some day be drowned in such a hole, and thus fulfil the weird of the 'wise woman.'

We reached Athlone that evening long after dark, but in safety, to Peter's great surprise and self-congratulation. He had been thoroughly frightened by finding himself in proximity to the dreaded spot, and for some time afterwards boasted less than usual of his knowledge of 'every hole and corner in the bogs from Moate to Athlone.'

II.

I am an Irishman by birth and education, and have heard many weird stories in my native land, but seldom one which impressed me so much as that which Peter had told me. It kept my mind busy and my body wakeful that night till far into the small-hours. I did not know which to pity the most—the desperate man hurrying into the presence of his Maker with anathemas on his lips and a purpose of vengeance in his heart, or the living one who 'dreed his weird,' solitary amongst his fellows, unhelped and unpitied by them. Ere morning, I had resolved that, so far as I was concerned, the matter should not rest

there, but that I would at once pay Turlough O'Brien a visit, express my gratitude to him better than I had been able to do it in the hurry of the moment, and try to help him, at least by sympathy, if in no other way. He had refused to accept money; but he could scarcely decline a few articles, of use to a man in his circumstances, if brought to him as a present and not as a reward, and these might be my excuse for intruding upon him. Truth to tell, I was rather doubtful as to the reception I might meet with at the farm.

'Man proposes, and God disposes.' It is a trite saying, but a practical one. When I rose in the morning, I saw the sky covered from zenith to horizon by a leaden pall of cloud, whence descended an unbroken torrent of rain, turning the streets to rivers of mud, and splashing on the pavement from every gutter, as if the deluge were come again. Bog-trotting was, in such weather, out of the question, and I resigned myself to the inevitable, though reluctantly, as I knew well that when steady rain begins in the County Westmeath in November with a falling barometer, no man can say when it will stop. But I was scarcely prepared for the rainfall of that November. Ten whole days did it continue without a symptom of cessation; then came a break of sunshine late one afternoon, a fine night, and again rain in the morning. When, on the fourteenth day, the mercury in the barometer that hung in the anteroom showed signs of rising steadily, in place of jumping up and down every few hours, and the clouds thinned away and let a watery glimpse of sun come through, we were all thoroughly tired of inaction and indoor confinement, and half the country was under water.

Next morning was a glorious one, with a cloudless sky; and I started on my expedition—alone this time, as I did not think it fair to ask Peter to accompany me, knowing his feelings on the subject of my destination. I found locomotion very difficult, as the bogs were ankle-deep in water in some places, and once I thought seriously of turning back; but my good intentions were too strong for me, and I struggled on. About noon I passed the 'lone tree' and came in sight of Lough Galliaugh. It had become a respectable sheet of water by this time. The Devil's Scraugh was quite covered, and evidently my friend Turlough's engineering operations must have been suspended for some time past by the laws of nature. The cottage still stood where I last saw it, and a thin wreath of smoke rose from the chimney, proving that the owner was at home. The stream below it had become a swollen river, moving sluggishly onward close to the walls of the hut, having evidently flooded the potato-garden and fields adjoining. I was pleased to think that I had brought a few luxuries with me, a pound or so of tobacco and so on; for evidently the outcast had need of something to keep his spirits up, in view of the desolation around him.

Having thus reflected, I looked again towards the gloomy pool where I had so nearly lost my life. Curiously enough, it seemed larger than when I had viewed it a few minutes before. As I tried to account in my own mind for this phenomenon, I felt a trembling of the ground

beneath my feet; and, with a dull sullen roar, the whole bog, from Lough Galliagh downwards, split away, opening a vast chasm, filled with black foaming water, and slid away bodily towards the stream below. A few yards it thus moved unbroken, and then split in every direction into a maze of islands, all borne downwards by a resistless rush of water, that had accumulated twenty feet beneath the bog upon the impervious marl subsoil, and now bore away its load triumphantly, in a roaring torrent, directed straight upon the cottage by the stream.

At the first dull roar, I had seen—I seemed to see everything at once—the door of the hut open, and a man standing on the threshold looking towards Lough Galliagh. Then the flood broke; and cottage and man vanished like a dream in the stream beyond, followed by the great masses of peat, which choked up the bed of the channel, and piled themselves on the further bank like chaos come again. I am not ashamed to say that I turned and ran for my life. There was no saying whether my part of the bog would not follow the other. However, the release of the water had saved the remainder of the peat; and I was able, by making a long detour, to avoid that chasm where once was Lough Galliagh, and to strike the bed of the stream about a mile farther down, where already a crowd of country-people had collected, and were gazing in bewildered astonishment at the devastation around them. One or two of the most practical—or perhaps most apathetic—amongst them were groping in the rapidly diminishing waters of the stream, and fishing out relics of the furniture of the cottage, which had been struck by the first force of the released waters and carried down the stream in fragments, before the mass of peat had dammed the channel.

‘Hurroo, Johnneen!’ shouted one stalwart fellow, holding on to a long pole with a salmon gaff at the end of it. ‘I have a houl of something weighty this time. Lend me a hand, and we’ll have it out.’

I knew instinctively what was coming, and shrank from the sight. The women screamed and the men crossed themselves as the body of Turlough O’Brien was raised from the water and drawn towards the bank. His stern face with its black hair looked set and ghastly in death; and it had a great gash across the forehead, caused no doubt by some timber of the hut striking it in the water. There seemed some difficulty in getting the corpse out of the water, and it soon appeared that the right hand held a death-grip of something which looked like a bit of smoke-browned rafter. The salmon gaff was again used, and the men raised the body and its prize together.

‘God be betune us and all evil!’ shrieked an old woman. ‘Sure, it’s his own brother he has a houl of! Throw him in again, boys, or bad luck will follow yez!’

‘Nonsense,’ said I hastily, seeing an evident disposition on the part of the men to comply with the injunction. ‘Surely that thing can’t be a body?’

It was one, however, shrivelled and dried up like a mummy, but nevertheless preserved by the strange antiseptic power of the peat, so that the features were perfectly recognisable. A man in

the crowd identified it at once as what remained of Patrick O’Brien. Clearly, it had been carried out of its resting-place by the descending water.

As a suicide, the priest refused to bury Patrick O’Brien in consecrated ground; and the public opinion against Turlough was so strong that they did not dare to lay him in the graveyard. After the inquest, the bodies were claimed by some man in the neighbourhood, who declared himself—falsely, I believe—to be a relative of the deceased. No one cared to dispute his claim, or ask what he did with them; but I have reason to think that the country-people buried them somewhere near the old site of Lough Galliagh, by advice of the ‘wise woman,’ who declared that such was the only way to remove the ban that hung over the place.

ONLY A LITTLE CROSS.

ALL cold and lone, on the ground we found him.
The brave young spirit had passed away;
And as we folded his cloak around him,
We thought how nobly he fought that day.
Bright drops of dew on the curls were gleaming
That lay caressing the boyish brow.
Ah! that pale young face in the moonlight beaming
Is ever rising before me now.

A broken sword near his hand was lying—
His mother’s picture—a lock of hair;
And to his heart he had clasped, while dying,
The little cross that she used to wear.
That bright young head on the ground reposing,
The white face turned to the star-lit skies,
How still it lay, while strange hands were closing
The heavy lids o’er the once bright eyes.

’Twas then we thought how that light foot never
Again should beat on the cottage floor;
The joyous laughter was hushed for ever,
That gaily rang through the open door.
’Twas then we pictured his mother kneeling,
To kiss the pillow his cheek had prest;
From happy comrades, a pale girl stealing,
To sing the songs that he loved the best.

We thought how they who with smiles did greet him,
Could find none dearer to take his place;
The noisy children that ran to meet him,
Would watch in vain for his pleasant face;
The father’s eyes would grow dim, while telling
The daring deeds of his gallant boy;
And gloom would fall on that little dwelling,
Whose walls once echoed with sounds of joy.

The little cross from his cold hand taking,
One parting look on his face, and then,
With trembling fingers, and hearts nigh breaking,
We laid it down on his breast again;
And with a prayer for the thousand mothers
Who nightly watch till the shadows flee,
We left him there, for we knew that others
Would need our help, oh, far more than he!

FANNY FORRESTER.

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